A. MILTON MUSSER,
SALT LAKE CITY.

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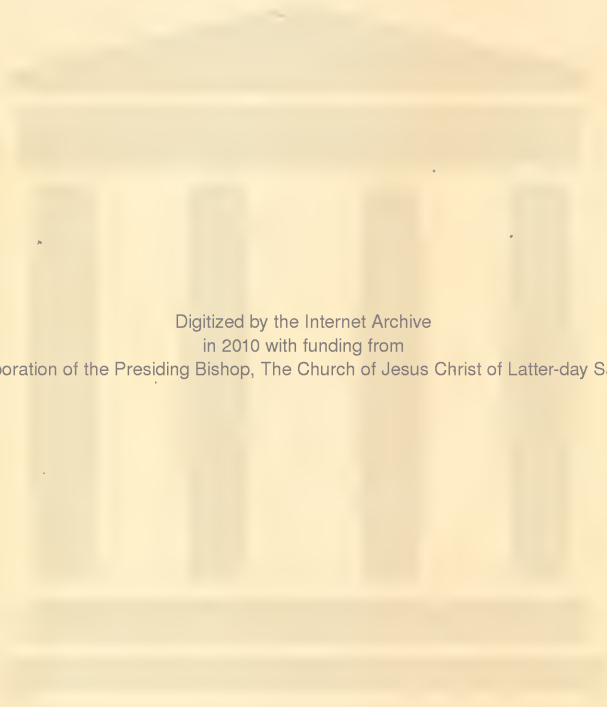

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CHAPTER II.

TRUE REPENTANCE.

THE PROMINENT EVILS OF WHICH THE PRESENT GENERATION ARE GUILTY—HOW TO REPENT OF THEM—NATURE OF GODLY SORROW—CONFESSION—THE PENITENT MUST ENTER INTO A SACRED COVENANT WITH GOD TO SIN NO MORE.

1.—Repentance is one of the gifts of God to fallen man. And in treating upon this subject, it will be assumed, on the strength of the word of God, that man is a fallen, sinful, lost being; degraded, ruined, and cast out from the presence of God; subject to His justice, wrath, and the penalty of His holy laws, which consign him to an eternal death and misery; and that a plan of salvation was devised and offered to him, to redeem him from his sins, and restore him to the favour of God. One of the conditions of this plan is a true and genuine Repentance.

2.—The great and infinite sacrifice, made by the Son of God, for the sins of the world, has purchased for man the gift of Repentance, which, if properly received and exercised, will give him a claim upon the mercy of God against whom he has sinned. But without Repentance, mercy can have no claim on the sinner.

3.—Repentance does not atone for past sins; neither could it have been a condition of pardon, if Christ who was innocent, had not suffered for the guilty.

4.—Without the atonement, Repentance would have been useless; mercy could not have been exercised, without interfering with the great attribute Justice.

5.—It was not the design of Jesus, in atoning for the sins of the world, to save man in his sins; neither to pardon him in a state of impenitance. But the design of the atonement was to offer mercy on the condition of Repentance. Therefore, without Repentance, man must suffer the penalty of his sins, the same as if no atonement had been made.

6.—That the sinner may have a clear understanding of the nature of Repentance, we shall divide the subject into four branches, namely,

First, *The evils and sins to be repented of.*

Secondly, *The nature of the sorrow connected with true Repentance.*

Thirdly, *The Confession necessary for the penitent.*

And lastly, *The promise and determination to sin no more.*

7.—We shall examine, First, *The evils and sins to be repented of.* An innocent being who has committed no sin, cannot repent; neither can any one repent who is not convinced of sin. Sin against God is a transgression of

His law. A person unacquainted with the law of God may ignorantly transgress it, and have no idea that he has done wrong. Such a person, while unconvinced of sin, will feel no need of Repentance.

8.—Without a knowledge of the revealed law of God, a person cannot always discern betwen good and sinful actions. It is true, that the light which is in every man that comes into the world, will enable him, without the aid of the revealed law, to distinguish, in some small degree, between good and evil. But there are many evils that could not be known short of the revealed law. The light of conscience will make manifest some of the more glaring evils; but this light becomes greatly obscured by neglect and by constant violation of its teachings, so much so, that persons may become almost or wholly insensible to the dictates of conscience; many actions which were once considered evils, will, by constant habit, be considered virtuous; while many practices once considered good, will, by tradition and habit, be transformed into evils. A heathen entirely unacquainted with the revealed law, would, if he were always to follow the still small voice of conscience, receive more and more light, and be able to discover many important truths, and to distinguish between virtue and vice more clearly than those who are constantly violating the monitor within them. But with all the light that he could glean, independent of revelation, he would be far from understanding the sinfulness of many actions, and would be entirely ignorant of the nature of others, in regard to whether they were sinful or not; and he would also be wholly uninformed in regard to a future judgment, and the penalties to be inflicted upon sinners; and without a knowledge of these things, he could not repent acceptably as the Gospel requires.

9.—Where there is no knowledge of the revealed law of God, sinful actions will not be punished to the same extent as where the laws and their penalties are known; for the apostle says, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Rom. v. 13.) That is, sin is not imputed to the same extent, and they are not punished with the same severity, as those who are acquainted with the law. Hence, the Saviour declares that he who knoweth the master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; while he that knoweth not, and yet doeth things worthy of punishment, shall be beaten with few stripes. The apostle also says, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." (Rom. ii. 12.) The heathen, therefore, will perish without law, and be beaten with few stripes, because they obeyed not the light that was in them; but the penalty of the revealed law, will not fully be executed upon them, and it will be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment, than for those who have sinned, having the law, and who are to be judged by the law, and have the sentence of the law executed upon them. Such, without Repentance, will suffer eternal torment and everlasting banishment from the presence of God. And they will have weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

10.—Having learned that man is convicted of sin by the law, let us next endeavour to ascertain what sins the present generation are guilty of, in order to learn whether they have any need to repent. We will, for the present, pass over the sins of the heathens, and enumerate some of the evils existing among Christian nations where the have copies of the revealed law, existing by millions, and where almost every family can read the sacred pages of the same.

11.—The divine law says, "*Thou shalt not kill.*" Now it is not the individual who murders who is alone criminal, but all those who sanction the same. When the Saints were murdered in Missouri and Illinois, by the marshalled hosts of the wicked, who were urged on by the highest authorities of those states, it is a notable fact that thousands of professed Christians, and many Christian ministers of different denominations, were directly engaged in those most wicked and horrid murders. When the great prophet of the Lord was taken unlawfully from his peaceful avocations, and torn from his family, and carried with a number of others, into the mob camp, and was sentenced to be shot the next morning, who was it that sanctioned and urged on these diabolical deeds? We reply, that among the vast hosts of those who made no profession of religion, there were no less than SEVENTEEN preachers of different orders who were in this council, and most strenuously urged the cold-blooded murder of the Prophet and his friends, in the presence of their own families upon the public square. Have these preachers, and the thousands of professors of religion who took such an active part in the foul murders of the Saints, been disfellowshipped by their brethren throughout the world? No, they are still, the most of them, retained in the respective churches to which they belonged. But were those who immediately participated in these bloody persecutions, the only ones guilty? Were there not hundreds of thousands in Christendom, who in their hearts sanctioned these things, and who still continue to sanction them? Will the persons who committed these murders and shed the blood of the only prophets which God has sent to the earth for more than a thousand years, be the only ones condemned as murderers in the day of judgment? No. Every person who has in the least sanctioned these things will suffer with the murderers, unless they repent, The Saviour said that the blood of all the prophets which had been shed upon the earth, from the days of righteous Abel, until the blood of Zacharius, which was shed between the temple and the altar, should be required of that generation. Why? Because they sanctioned the murder of contemporary prophets. The approbation given to the murder of the prophet Zacharius, and other prophets sent directly to them, was just as wicked as though they had actually killed all the former ones. So likewise, God will require of every individual on the earth, who in the least sanctions the murder of Joseph the prophet, or of any of the Saints, the blood of those holy men at their hands; and not only their blood, but the blood of every righteous person that has been shed upon the earth in any age, will be required at the hands of those among this generation who give countenance in their hearts to these wicked deeds. This, therefore, is one among the many sins which hundreds of thousands are guilty of, and of which they must most heartily repent, or else the blood of the prophets and the Saints will ascend up to heaven against them, and in the great day of judgment, they will receive their portion, not only among hypocrites and unbelievers, but among murderers, whose deeds they have sanctioned.

12.—Also, the revealed law says, "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" And we are informed that those who do this evil are to be punished with murderers. The Lord says, by the mouth of John the revelator, that "The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Now, when we examine the present state of the nations of Christendom, what do

we find? We find them continually practising these great evils so clearly and expressly forbidden in the law of God. In the city of New York alone, there are about twenty thousand public prostitutes, who procure their living by a constant violation of these divine laws. In the cities of Boston, Albany, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and scores of others that might be named, there are thousands of female prostitutes. Now these wretched and vile characters are supported by hundreds of thousands of the male population, who daily and hourly commit crimes sufficient to sink that nation to the lowest hell. In ancient times such iniquities brought swift judgment upon the whole people where they were allowed. For one such crime among the tribe of Benjamin, God commanded the other tribes to go to war with them; add the whole tribe, men, women, and children, were cut off, with the exception of a very few. Does God feel any different towards this sin now, from what he did then? Is he not unchangeable in regard to his abhorence of sin? If so, what must be his feelings to look down and behold several hundred thousand adulterers and adulteresses, and whoremongers in the American nation —a nation that boasts of her moral and Christian institutions, and refinements? How is it that the heavens can withhold speedy and awful vengeance from that nation? Nothing but the few honest, sincere, and humble souls among them, prevents an entire overthrow and destruction. When these are gathered out, then will come the day of visitation and of fierce wrath, which has been held in reserve for a long time; then will he quickly wipe away these enormous, wholesale evils with which that choice land has been, for a long period, most fearfully and dreadfully polluted. But that nation is not alone sunk down to the lowest depths of degradation and wickedness; other nations calling themselves Christians, are equally guilty. In the city of London alone, there are about ninety thousand public female prostitutes, supported by several hundred thousand male prostitutes equally criminal. In Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and finally in all the large towns, tens of thousands get their daily and yearly living by the commission of this great crime. And what renders these evils still more abominable in the sight of God, is that they are constantly taking place in a land of Bibles, where millions of copies of the Divine Law are circulated in their midst, and where all have an opportunity of informing themselves of the denunciations of heaven against these iniquities. Again, when we cross over from Christian England to the European nations on the continent, the scenery is still worse, and too abominable to be named, or even thought of, in regard to the extent and magnitude of these filthy, soul-destroying dens of pollution. In many of these nations, their own statistics show, that above half the number of infants born are illegitimate. Only think of the extent of crime, when in one nation, comparatively small, from fifty to a hundred thousand illegitimate children are annually born, which is, as it were, only an index to the still greater amount of crime that does not render itself quite so apparent.

13.—It is almost an astonishment that God should have permitted these nations to practice these great abominations, for so many generations, without utterly destroying them from the earth. And it is also an astonishment that He should condescend to send a Prophet with a message to a generation so awfully corrupt and wicked as the present. They are not worthy of Prophets, or Apostles, or the Book of Mormon, but yet God has sent one of the most glorious messages that ever reached the ears of mortals, to this very

generation who are worthy of nothing but judgment. He has done this, not because many of them will receive it, but because He intends to pour out the vials of His wrath upon them; and He knows that the rejection of so great a message will more speedily ripen them for an entire overthrow and utter desolation; that His vineyard may no more be cumbered with such abominable trash. God very well knew, that this generation were too far gone in the wicked traditions of their fathers, and sunk too low in the depths of wickedness, to receive a Prophet, or hearken to the voice of inspiration; but He knew that the rejection of Prophets, and of the Book of Mormon, would leave them without the least excuse, when He should rise up to destroy and make a full end of wickedness.

14.—Perhaps the nations of Christendom may enquire, how they shall repent of these great evils? and how they shall put away these crimes from their midst? We answer: let Presidents, Governors, Queens, Kings, Emperors, Rulers, and all law-making departments, adopt those holy and wise laws, contained in the Divine oracles, making DEATH the penalty for adulteries, fornications, and whoredoms: let them ordain, enact, and incorporate those laws in their criminal codes: let the death penalty be executed upon both male and female criminals who violate them; let that wicked anti-scriptural law, prohibiting a plurality of wives, be repealed, that the millions of surplus female population in Christendom, may have the chance of an honorable virtuous marriage, and become honorable and virtuous wives and mothers, like Jacob's four wives from whom sprang the twelve tribes of Israel. Under these wholesome and scriptural regulations, there need not be one female doomed to a life of single wretchedness. However great the excess of females, arising from the destruction of males by the calamities of war and other causes, yet, by the Bible system of plurality, they may all find husbands, and enjoy the endearing relationships of respectable wives and mothers.

15.—In London alone, there are, if we have been correctly informed, about five hundred thousand more females than males. The same proportionate excess of females is to be found in many countries. All these are doomed by the corrupt anti-scriptural laws of Christendom, to remain single without husbands—without protectors—without participating in the joys of pure, holy, conjugal love, as was intended for the sexes by the great Creator. Under these unrighteous laws and restrictions, hundreds of thousands of females abandon themselves to guilty and criminal indulgence, until all Christendom is flooded with whoredoms and adulteries.

16.—Let Christendom, therefore, abolish their unwise, unscriptural, cruel monogamic laws; and adopt the Divine institution of Plurality; let them execute the Death penalty of the Divine law, upon those having criminal connexions, and they will soon be cleansed from the stench and filth of those cursed dens of pollution which have so publicly infested their cities for ages.

17.—The criminal codes in Christendom pretend to be founded, more or less, upon the Divine oracles. If laws are made against criminal intercourse between the sexes, why not affix to them the Divine penalties? Why make the penalties so light, as to be of little or no effect, in restraining this great evil? Why be so lenient with a crime that is sending forth a nauseous deadly plague through the nations, annually carrying its hundreds of thousands to a degraded untimely grave? Why suffer the lanes, streets, and highways of your towns and cities to be daily and nightly over-run by debauched criminals, who have, by the law of God, justly forfeited their lives? Oh Christen-

dom! Why do you insult the great Majesty of heaven with your hypocritical prayers, when you suffer such abominable and soul-destroying crimes to continue in your midst and flourish from age to age? Why do you hypocritically call yourselves Christian nations, when you suffer whoredoms and adulteries to be committed hourly and daily sufficient to sink you to the lowest depths of hell? Oh Christendom! how can you hide your shame or wherewithal will you cover up your nakedness! Your whoredoms have polluted the whole earth! and your golden cup is full and overflowing with filth and abominations! The cry of your sins has reached the heavens! and the angels have unsheathed the glittering sword of justice! They wait the great command to strike the fatal blow! The fire of heaven shall consume thee in all thy filth and sins! It shall devour and burn unto the lowest hell! As thou hast rejoiced in thy great wickedness, and mocked at the message of Repentance; so the heavens shall rejoice at thy downfall, and mock at thy fearful calamities!

18.—It is in vain to hope to reform the nations from these enormous and everywhere prevalent evils, without adopting the strict penalty of the law of God. When this penalty was in force, in ancient times, it was seldom that this crime was committed. Let it be enforced again, and there would soon be exhibited a great reformation: adulteries and criminal connexions would become as rare as murders; every haunt of pollution among the nations would be broken up; no female would. at the risk of her life, think of following a practice so criminal and vile. With such a law, the constant practice of prostitution would be attended with the same degree of danger, as the constant practice of murder. Such laws, and such only, would prove an effectual remedy against this great crime which has so fearfully and extensively corrupted the earth.

19.—Every man in Christendom, if he would repent, should use his influence to stay the mighty torrent of corruption which exists; and bring the guilty to punishment. Authors and editors should cause the press, with its million tongues, to speak like the roaring of mighty thunders, against these deadly evils. Ministers and statesmen, armed with the law of God, and with words of burning eloquence, should arouse the slumbering nations to a sense of their danger; should portray the necessity of restoring the Divine law against these crimes; should most earnestly urge an immediate reform; and should not cease their exertions, until the damning sin of whoredoms, with all its numerous train of evils, is blotted out of the earth.

20.—He that will not seek to reform, and to bring the guilty to that punishment, decreed in the Divine law, will be held as a participator in these hell-deserving crimes. As we have already observed, the whole tribe of Benjamin was nearly extinguished from the face of the earth, because they refused to bring the guilty ones to punishment. It was not because the whole tribe had been directly guilty of the crime of adultery; but because they refused to bring the few that were guilty to justice; therefore, God held the whole tribe responsible for the wicked acts of the very few individuals; and the same penalty of death that would have been inflicted only upon the few who were the actual guilty ones, was, with equal justice, inflicted upon the whole who refused to deliver up the criminals. So likewise shall it be with the whole of Christendom, unless they seek to do away these abominations from their midst. God will denounce them as being equally guilty with those who commit these crimes: and He will inflict upon them the same penalty

that should have been inflicted upon the criminals; and he will cast them down to hell to dwell with such vile and abominable characters; because they did not seek to destroy these crimes from the land.

21.—The Latter-day Saints in the Territory of Utah, are the only ones in Christendom who have taken effectual measures, we will not say, *to suppress*, for the word is entirely inapplicable to them, but to *prevent* adulterers and criminal connexions between the sexes. The punishment, in that territory, for these crimes, is DEATH TO BOTH MALE AND FEMALE. And this law is written on the hearts and printed in the thoughts of the whole people. Does not this righteous and just law have its desired effect upon them? Yes! it establishes virtue upon a permanent foundation, and deals out justice to the vile seducer, adulterer, and whoremonger, so far as it can be dealt out in this life: it preserves the purity of the morals of the whole population, which is essentially necessary to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of any people, government, or nation. There, no houses of ill fame, or public or private prostitutes can be found to corrupt society, and pollute the land. There, no arch seducer is permitted to flatter the young and inexperienced female, till he has ruined his victim and left her an outcast from society. There no vile adulterer can creep into families, and violate the sacred chastity of the marriage covenant. What prevents these evils? It is the righteousness of the people, and the righteousness of their laws; it is the love of virtue and the fear of punishment combined. This is the kind of Repentance and reformation acceptable in the sight of God; it is to repent, not in word only, but in deed, and in truth, and in the enactment of just and equitable laws; and in the execution of these laws upon the transgressor. Repentance is not to ascend into a finely cushioned pulpit, and there whine over the wickedness of the people, without taking any effectual means to reform and suppress that wickedness. Repentance does not consist in merely pointing out the evil and professing to be very much grieved that it exists, but it consists in refraining from the evil, and pointing out the remedy by which it can be corrected, and applying that remedy, as far as possible, and teaching all others to apply it. Utah is an example; and the virtuous results of her wholesome and just laws should induce the States and other territories, and all the nations of Christendom, to follow in the same virtuous track. Let them try it, and we will ensure them a much more wholesome moral atmosphere: and the overflowing floods of prostitution will be assuaged, and the fountain will dry up, and the houses of ill fame will be abolished; and these abominable evils will vanish away, and God will repent of the severe and terrible judgments which he intends to bring upon these nations, and his chastisements will not be so heavy upon them. But if they repent not, but permit these crimes to continue, the Almighty will surely visit them, and will not spare, but will execute all his fierce wrath upon them, until they shall be consumed, both root and branch, and be blotted out from under heaven; for this is the eternal decree of Jehovah, and the time is at hand.

22.—Among the various evils forbidden by the revealed law, is that of falsehood. God so detests this evil, that He has informed us, that whosoever "loveth or maketh a lie shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." God is a God of truth, and cannot lie without violating the great perfections and attributes of His nature, which if He should do, His power and glory would cease, and other Beings who are filled with all the fulness of His attributes, would succeed in His place. But God knowing

all things, and loving righteousness and truth with a perfect love, it is impossible for Him to violate the great unchangeable principles of His nature. Now, all those who are permitted to dwell in His presence, must love truth as he loves it, and be as stable and unchangeable in truth as He is. Any who are otherwise, can by no means be permitted to dwell there, to disturb the peace, happiness, confidence, and truthfulness that reign universally in those pure and heavenly mansions. The devil was a liar from the beginning, and is the father of lies, and all those who are addicted to this evil, are his children, and will dwell with their father, and be miserable as he is miserable, and partake with him of all the bitterness of hell, and associate with liars, and deceivers, and every evil doer. Besides the lake of fire into which they are cast, they will make an additional hell of their own by their own demoniac and malicious passions.

23.—But how is it with this generation, in regard to making and loving lies? It is doubtful whether there ever was a generation so addicted to lying as the present. The spirit prevails among all classes, both the high and the low, the infidel and the professed Christian; all, with very few exceptions, are given, either to make lies, or to love them after they are made. When God sent a great prophet to this generation to reveal to them the Book of Mormon, as the great and last warning message, preparatory to the revelation of his Son from the heavens to execute vengeance upon the wicked and ungodly, how was the message treated? We reply, that the people began immediately to lie about it; and they have kept up this lying from that time until the present. One would declare that the Book of Mormon was originated in one way; another, in another; one making this lie, and another that; and the printing press has groaned under the weight of falsehood, published to prevent the people from repenting according to the requirements of this message. Pamphlets have followed pamphlets, and volumes have succeeded volumes to blind the minds of the people, and harden their hearts against the only message by which they can possibly be saved, either in this world, or in the world to come. Two of the most powerful engines that the father of lies has used to circulate these falsehoods, are the priests and editors. These have greedily snatched up falsehoods of every description, and of the blackest character, and multiplied millions on millions of copies, and sent them with the rapidity of the steam car to the four winds of heaven; while the long-faced and professedly pious priests have reiterated these lies from the pulpit, and warned their congregations with many pious groans and hypocritical tears to beware of the Book of Mormon, and to reject it without any investigation, and to cast out the servants of God from their houses, and not listen to them for a moment, but to reject them as impostors, untried and unproved. These lies have had their desired effect, to shut up churches and meeting-houses, and close the doors and hearts of the people against God's servants, and the great message of Repentance which God has sent them to proclaim. In this thing the "father of lies" is made glad, and the hosts of darkness rejoice with a hellish exultation, in the prospects of reaping an abundant harvest of souls, whom they have deceived by their lies, and whom their priests have deluded by their hypocrisy.

24.—The persons who invented these lies against the servants of God, and against the divine message of Repentance, contained in the Book of Mormon, are not the only ones who are guilty; they are not the only ones who will be punished in the lake of fire as liars; but all who have published these lies,

and all who have loved to read and hear them, will share the same fate. The lover of lies is equally as guilty as the maker; hence, they will both go to the same place, and both will suffer the second death, unless they repent.

25.—It is a fearful thing to reject a prophet of God, or a servant of God, or a revelation from God; and especially to reject a message, so infinitely important as the one which God has given in the Book of Mormon; and the devil knows that he is sure of the people if he can only make them reject it; and hence his untiring exertions in the invention of all manner of falsehoods to accomplish his malicious and hellish object.

26.—But, it may be inquired, how are the humble, honest souls to discern between truth and falsehood? Must they be condemned with liars, because they are deceived with lies? We answer, that all will be condemned who suffer themselves to be deceived; for there is a way for every person to come to the light of truth; and it is not in the power of the devil to invent lies so plausible as to prevent the really honest person from discovering the truth that pertains to his salvation. The Scriptures have expressly declared, that "cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm." Now any person who will put his confidence and trust in popular lies, invented by the devil to prevent the people from discovering the truth, must rest under that curse, and in the day of judgment be condemned with liars. What excuse can any one have for rejecting the truth, because the devil has made lies, and nearly all mankind believe them? The Scriptures inform us that we are to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." There must be some infallible rule by which to prove things, and discern the good from the evil, or else we never should have been exhorted to do so. This infallible test by which to discover the truth, is the light which God has already given us, and which He will give us if we will but properly seek after it. But when a person suffers himself to be blinded by the lies of uninspired men, so far as to close his doors and his heart against investigation, and rejects the message of heaven in the Book of Mormon, upon popular rumour, or because his minister rejects it, he is justly condemned for suffering himself to be thus imposed upon, and led about by the precepts of those who he knows do not even profess to be inspired of God. He is putting his trust in man and making flesh his arm, the moment that he suffers others to judge for him in matters so infinitely important, involving the salvation of his soul: therefore, he is cursed of God, and will die, and go to hell, unless he repents, notwithstanding his apparent honesty. Therefore, no man, nor woman, nor child, that has come to the years of accountability, can be justified, for one moment, in rejecting God's revealed will, contained in the Book of Mormon, and especially if he or she has never placed himself or herself in a position to investigate these divine truths.

27.—But it will be a very difficult matter for some of those who have published lies to repent. For instance, many editors of newspapers have been instruments in the hands of the devil of publishing a vast amount of the blackest kind of falsehoods against the truth, and against the few honest, humble souls who have received it. By the wholesale circulation of these falsehoods, they have stirred up the people to mobs and riots, and to shed the blood of the innocent. Though it might be within their power to repent and make restitution in part, yet they never could counteract fully the vast amount of injury which they have done. They might use their papers as extensively in publishing the truths of the Book of Mormon, as they have

in publishing lies against it and the Saints, and thus endeavour to counteract the evils that they have done; but they can never recall the innocent from their graves, whom they have been indirectly the cruel instruments of murdering by the wicked and malicious lies they have so extensively circulated. Such, therefore, will find it hard to repent; yet even these may have been, in some instances, swayed by popular prejudices, and led to do many things in their ignorance against the truth, against God, and against His people, of which it may be possible, as in the case of Paul, for them to obtain forgiveness and salvation by receiving the truth, and hereafter devoting all their energies to print, and publish, and spread forth the same. But do what they may to recover themselves, and make restitution, they will always have it to regret, that they have ever written or printed anything against so great and glorious a message as the one revealed in the opening of this last dispensation. But if we could see any symptoms of Repentance and reformation on their part, we would gladly take them by the hand, and try to raise them up and encourage them in the mighty struggle to recover themselves from the great and multiplied evils that they have done through the medium of the press.

28.—What evils lies have done in our world! It was through the lies of the devil that our first parents were persuaded to partake of the forbidden fruit; it was through the lies invented by the wicked, that the holy prophets were rejected by the respective generations to whom they were sent. Hence our Saviour says to His disciples, "Blessed are ye when men shall speak all manner of evil against you *falsely* for my sake; for so did they of the prophets who were before you." All prophets and inspired men were lied about, and the people were persuaded through these lies to reject the only means of their salvation. It was through liars and false witnesses that the Saviour of the world was condemned to be crucified; it has been through the testimony of false witnesses that the Jews have, from generation to generation, continued to reject Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah; it was through lying that they were persuaded to believe that his disciples came and stole his body from the tomb. Through lies, millions at the present day believe that the great Prophet of God, Joseph Smith, was an imposter. Through the belief of lies millions in ancient times were destroyed from the earth and sent down to hell; and through the reliance which this generation place in newspaper reports, and the lies invented against the Book of Mormon and the Saints, millions more will be swept off, and their portion assigned them in the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," in company with ancient liars, and those who loved the same.

29.—Some lies are much more wicked than others, and calculated to do infinitely more harm. To lie for the purpose of cheating your neighbor—to lie so as to injure the character of any one—to lie for the purpose of punishing the innocent or screening the guilty, are very great evils. But when compared with lies against a divine message sent from heaven, they dwindle into insignificancy. In the former cases, the lies are against men; in the latter, they are against God. In the former, they injure their neighbor temporarily; in the latter, they injure him spiritually, by blinding his mind against the truth, and that, too, against the only truth by which he can be saved. Lies, therefore, against a revelation which God gives for the salvation of a generation, will be considered in the day of judgment as an evil of very great magnitude, and the punishment will be in proportion.

30.—We have now pointed out three very great evils, of which this generation are very guilty before God. These evils are, first, the murder of the Prophets and Saints of God, and the sanctioning of the same, by letting the murderers go unpunished, and permitting them to boast of their bloody deeds in the most public manner. Second, the hundreds of thousands of public prostitutes, which they permit to commit crimes of the most abominable nature, in all the large cities and towns throughout Christendom without taking efficient measures by legislative action to suppress them. And, third, the great sin of lying against what God has revealed in the Book of Mormon for the salvation of the nations, to prepare them for the coming of His Son. These are three of the most prominent evils of which this generation must most heartily repent, if they would escape the threatened evils with which they will otherwise most assuredly be visited.

31.—Another evil of no small magnitude is the vast amount of false doctrines which are taught, and extensively believed and practised throughout Christendom. Doctrines which are calculated to ruin the soul, are, in some respects, greater evils than those which merely have a bearing upon our temporal interests. A man who, through dishonesty, defrauds his neighbor of his property, and brings distress and temporal ruin upon his family, is exceedingly guilty before God, and will, if he repent not and make no restitution, be severely punished; but how much greater will be the condemnation and punishment of that man who, through his cunning craftiness, palms upon his neighbor a false doctrine which is calculated to ruin him and his family, not temporally, but eternally! Thieves and robbers are less guilty before God than such false teachers.

32.—We will now mention some of these soul-destroying doctrines that are taught in Christendom, and which millions have had the wickedness to believe. First. These false teachers have had the presumption to deny the necessity of continued revelation from God, and have actually, in direct opposition to the Bible, persuaded whole nations to believe in this ruinous and impious doctrine. The great wickedness of this doctrine will appear when we reflect that it strikes a deadly blow against Christianity and against the religion of the Bible. This fearful delusion was invented soon after the Apostles fell asleep, by a set of corrupt, vile apostates, who had so far departed from God that they could not get any communication from Him; and fearing that the more honest portions of mankind would discover a great contrast between their apostate condition and the condition of the true Church, which was always, without one exception, blessed with Prophets and inspired men, they concluded to use all their sophistry and cunning to persuade the people that they already had enough revelation, and that they needed no further communication from heaven. If they could only get the people to believe this strong delusion, they knew that it would most effectually blind them in regard to their apostacy. They at length succeeded, though not without a great struggle of conscience among the more honest portions of the people. These could not so readily yield consent to so strange and unheard of doctrine. They looked back through the whole history of the dealings of God with His people, from the time that man was created to their day; and they could not discover one solitary instance of a true people of God; but what they had continued revelations from Him; and those who did not have these blessings were denounced as heathens, or in a state of apostacy. They were expressly told in their Scriptures, that "*where there is no vision the people perish.*" It

therefore, required no small exertion on the part of these wicked apostates to introduce, and get the people to believe in, a doctrine so entirely new and strange, and so directly opposed to the whole tenor of divine revelation. But finally, through the help of the Devil, and after a long struggle, during which scores of thousands were tortured and put to death, they succeeded so far as to make an ecclesiastical law, not only positively excluding all further revelation, but actually limiting the faith of their apostate clan to a certain number of books, called, by them, "*Canonical.*" This took place at the Third Council of Carthage, in the year 397. All were forbidden to receive anything as the word of God, only the few canonical manuscripts which this apostate council had selected. This fatal law had its desired effect, in entailing upon posterity the soul-destroying delusion that God would no more speak with mortals. This great imposition has been transferred down to our time, and is extensively taught through all the nations of Christendom.

33.—If this delusion was confined to some obscure corner of the earth, among unlettered barbarians, it would not be so fearful in its consequences, but to be embraced by millions of the most civilized people of our globe, and that, too, in direct defiance of the Bible, renders it vastly more offensive in the sight of God. It is calculated to destroy millions on millions of souls; for who, with the Bible in their hands, can expect to be saved, if they suffer themselves to believe or harbor such a wicked doctrine in their hearts? Do you expect that God will save you, when you have the rashness to declare that you have no need of prophets and revelators—that you have enough of the word of God already? You cannot plead ignorance, like many hundreds of millions who have died in past ages, who were never favoured with the privilege of reading the Bible? You can have no excuse because your minister, and your neighbors, and your fathers, have taught you this imposition. You have the Bible, and you can read and judge for yourselves; and the whole tenor of that sacred book will show you most clearly to the contrary. The Bible will inform you that, so long as the Christian Church was on the earth, they were favoured with continued revelation; it will tell you that the Christian Church were guided and led continually by the spirit of prophecy and revelation—by living revelators and inspired men. It will tell you that anything short of that order of things is not of God, but of men. If you will, therefore, by popular tradition, and through the influence of your popular false teachers, suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by such absurd, unscriptural, and anti-Christian doctrines, you need not flatter yourselves that you can be saved; for God will not save those who reject the doctrine of continued revelation. This, therefore, is another great evil of which this generation are deeply guilty before God; and He has called upon them by the voice of His servants, and by the voice of revelation, contained in the Book of Mormon, to repent of this evil, and give no more heed to false doctrines of this nature, declaring that all those who do not repent of these things, shall be cut off and sent down to hell.

34.—Another false doctrine taught and almost universally believed by this wicked generation is, that it is no longer the privilege of believers to receive the miraculous signs promised to them in the Scriptures. For instance, Jesus informs us, in the most express terms, as recorded in the last chapter of Mark, and in many other Scriptures, that certain miraculous gifts should be given to believers throughout all the world, wherever the Gospel should be preached, and be believed and obeyed. And lest some

wicked apostate or false teacher should undertake to limit the signs to the believers in the first age of Christianity, he most emphatically declares that "EVERY CREATURE" in all the world, who should believe the Gospel and be baptized, should not only be saved, but that all such should have power in his name to "cast out devils"—"speak with new tongues"—"take up serpents" and deadly poisons should not hurt them—and they should "lay hands upon the sick, and they should recover." Now, who could have believed that generations of professed Christians would arise, who, with the Bible in their hand, would have the bold, unblushing impudence, to declare that the believer has no right to claim this promise of our Lord? Only think, dear reader, of the millions of professed believers in the Gospel, who crowd the streets on the Sabbath day to go to their respective places of worship, and yet not one of them throughout the congregated millions, even professes to claim the promise of Jesus in regard to the Gospel blessings: they call themselves believers, and yet they have not the signs of believers—they profess that Jesus is their Saviour, and yet every soul of them rejects his word in relation to the promised signs: they are very willing to claim one of the promises in the same connexion with these signs, viz., *Salvation*, but the other promises spoken by the same Being, and on the same occasion, are utterly rejected; and if any honest, humble soul among them should begin to seek after the promised signs, and exhort his brethren to do the same, he would immediately be denounced as an enthusiast, or as insane; and if he persisted in so doing, he would be excluded from their ranks, and expelled from their synagogues, as a dangerous person. Now what will become of all these false teachers who thus do away with the promises of Jesus? And what will become of the people who suffer themselves to be led by such hypocrites? They will, every soul of them, unless they repent of these false doctrines, be cast down to hell. Yes, every man and woman, priest and people, that do not repent of having done away the miraculous gifts and blessings of the Gospel, will just as surely go to hell as they are living beings. Do not flatter yourselves that you will escape; for there is no escape for you, only to repent and turn unto the Lord, and seek most earnestly after the miraculous gifts of the Gospel, which you, and your false teachers, in your wickedness, and hypocrisy, have done away. Think not that you can follow the popular multitude in their forms of godliness, and with them deny the power thereof, and escape the righteous indignation of that holy Being whose words you have rejected. By his words that you have had in this life, you are to be judged in the last day; if you have received and obeyed them, well; if not they will condemn you, and you will shrink from the presence of Him who gave the word, and your guilty consciences will be racked with fear and pain, and the miseries of hell will lay hold upon you, and you will be made to feel that God's holy word is not spoken in vain, and that it cannot be rejected with impunity.

35.—Another very prevalent and great evil is in the land. Many thousands of these corrupt, false teachers, who have denied the necessity of the miraculous powers and gifts of the Gospel, and who have done away the gifts of prophecy and revelation from the church, have even dared to venture forward and officiate in some of the Gospel ordinances, as though they actually had authority from God; and many thousands have actually presumed to receive the holy, sacred ordinances of the Gospel from the hands of such corrupt, soul-destroying hypocrites. If there is any wickedness that borders

closely on blasphemy, it is this. What can be more impious in the sight of heaven, than for men to do away, as unnecessary, nearly all the most glorious gifts of the Gospel, and preach to their hearers that they are unnecessary in these days, and then have the audacious wickedness to minister the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, or pretend to baptize by the authority and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Such heaven-daring wickedness is calculated to sink these vile impostors to the lowest hell. And unless the people repent of having received baptism and other ordinances of the Gospel at the hands of such deceivers, they will be sent to hell with them; for if the blind lead the blind, they will all go into the ditch together, and the deceived, as well as the deceiver, will all have to reap the reward of their own corrupt doings.

36.—We know that many of you will be angry with us, and hate us, because we tell you of your wickedness thus plainly. But we have not been sent to flatter you with smooth things, nor to tell you that all is well; but we have been sent to set forth your sins, and your abominations, and all your evil works, which you continually practise before the Almighty, in clearness before your minds, and to call upon you in the name of Him who sent us, to repent of the same, and turn unto the Lord, and embrace the fulness of the Gospel which God has revealed anew in the Book of Mormon, or every one of you will, most assuredly, be damned. It matters not to us whether we please or displease you—whether we receive your good will, or incur your bitter hatred, our only object is to do the will of Him who has sent us, and to faithfully discharge our duty towards you.

37.—Many other evils might be mentioned of which it is needful for you to repent; but as you have much of the word of God pointing them out to you, it is not necessary for me in this chapter to describe every particular evil. Many of you are guilty of blaspheming that Holy Being who gave you existence, and of continually using His name in vain. Many of you are guilty of defrauding and taking the advantage of your neighbor; of bearing false witness; of slandering, reviling, and speaking evil of one another; of oppressing the poor; and of being lifted up in great pride; and of withholding your riches and your substance from the widow and the fatherless, and from the poor and needy, while you and your false teachers revel in the luxuries of the earth, and adorn your chapels, and your synagogues, and your churches with all manner of costly ornaments; and you clothe yourselves in silks, and satins, and in fine twined linen, and remember not that God gave these things to you, that you might not only be blessed yourselves, but that you might bless the sick and afflicted. Of all these things, and of many other evils, you must repent, or you can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God; for the cries of the poor and needy will ascend up before God against you.

38.—Having set forth the evils of which you are guilty, we now come to the second part of our subject, namely—*The nature of the sorrow connected with true Repentance.* There are different kinds of sorrow. Thieves, robbers, murderers, adulterers, &c., are frequently sorrowful because they have been detected in the crimes which they have committed. They are not sorrowful because they have sinned against God, or because they have injured others; but they are sorry that their crimes have been exposed, or that they have been prevented from a realization of the happiness which they anticipated. This is the sorrow of the world; and it is of the same nature as the sorrowing of the evil spirits in hell: they are sorry when they fail to accomplish their

malicious designs against God and His people. This kind of sorrow worketh death.

39.—Others have a species of sorrow arising through fear. They are convinced that they have, in numerous instances, violated the law of God, and they greatly fear the consequences in the great judgment day; but yet they feel no disposition to reform. They are sorry that there is a law of God, or a punishment in the world to come. They love wickedness, and are sorry that they must one day give an account before God for all their evil deeds. They are sorry that they cannot continue to cheat and defraud their neighbor, and heap up riches, without being harrassed with the idea of future punishment. Many are convinced in their hearts that the Book of Mormon is a divine revelation: and they are sorry that God should again speak to man; they are sorry that there is not some more popular way of being saved; they are sorry that they must subject themselves to the scorn and ridicule of the world, in order to receive the message which God has now sent. Finally, there are many things which create sorrow in the world.

40.—But the sorrow that is acceptable in the sight of God, is that which leads to true Repentance, or reformation of conduct: it is that sorrow which arises not only through fear of punishment, but through a proper sense of the evil consequences of sin; it is that sorrow which arises from a knowledge of our own unworthiness, and from a contrast of our own degraded and fallen condition with the mercy, goodness, and holiness of God. We are sorry that we should ever have condescended to do evil. We are sorry that we should ever have rendered ourselves so unworthy before God; we are sorry at the weakness of our own fallen nature. This kind of sorrow will lead us to obey every commandment of God; it will make us humble and childlike in our dispositions; it will impart unto us meekness and lowliness of mind; it will cause our hearts to be broken and our spirits to be contrite; it will cause us to watch, with great carefulness, every word, thought, and deed; it will call up our past dealings with mankind, and we will feel most anxious to make restitution to all whom we may have, in any way, injured. It will lead us to sympathize with the poor and needy, and, if we have riches, to administer to their wants; it will cause us to visit the sick and afflicted, and to do all that the Gospel requires, to alleviate their sufferings: these, and many other good things, are the results of a Godly sorrow for sin. This is Repentance not in word but in deed: this is the sorrow with which the heavens are well pleased.

41.—Third, *The confession necessary for the penitent*, in order to render him still more acceptable in the sight of God, is something that should not be overlooked by those who are desirous, not only to reform, but to obtain forgiveness of past sins. Though we may break off from our sins, and reform our conduct, yet we cannot expect a forgiveness of our past sins without a humble confession of the same. If we have trespassed against any of our neighbors, it is our duty, not only to make restitution, but to make a suitable confession and seek their forgiveness. We should also confess our sins to God, with a Godly sorrow and contrition of spirit.

42.—And lastly, this confession should be accompanied with a *promise and determination to sin no more.* To confess our sins before God, would be of no particular benefit, unless we were determined to forsake them. Without a covenant or promise before God, that we will forsake sin with an unshaken determination, that we will henceforth yield to no evil, our confession

and Repentance will be vain, and we must not expect to be pardoned; for the Holy one of Israel cannot be deceived, and will not pardon those who merely confess their sins, and still make no resolution to forsake them; a confession of sins, unaccompanied with the resolution to forsake, is a solemn mockery before Him, and will add to our guilt, and increase the displeasure of heaven against us. There are many who are afraid to make a promise that they will sin no more, lest they should break it. Now such thoughts are not right; for without entering into such a covenant, how can such ones expect to be forgiven and obtain salvation? If you were in a house enveloped with flames, and had the privilege to escape, would you still remain for fear that some future evil might happen to you? No: you would gladly accept the only possible means of safety. Oh, then, why suffer the devil to cheat you out of the only possible means of salvation, through fear of some imaginary evil which you have the power, through the grace of God, to ward off; If you linger behind, and enter into no covenant with God, for fear you may break it, you are sure to perish in your sins. Whereas, if you exercise your agency, and repent, entering into a solemn covenant to sin no more, the grace of God will be sufficient for you, to sustain you in the hour of temptation and trial.

43.—We have now pointed out all the prominent principles connected with true Repentance. And it can easily be seen by every honest heart, that God requires mankind, first to seek diligently to discern good from evil, and to ascertain what sins and evils they are guilty of; secondly, to be exercised with a Godly sorrow that they have ever sinned against so great and good a Being as God; thirdly, to make suitable confession before God, for all past sins committed; and lastly, such a confession must be accompanied with a solemn covenant or promise to sin no more; and the heart should be fixed and immovable in this covenant. All persons who will do these things will have a measure of the Spirit of Christ resting upon them, imparting humility, and meekness, and lowliness of heart. But still this Repentance does not guarantee to them a remission of sins; it only prepares the heart to obey properly a great and holy ordinance which God has instituted expressly for the remission of sins. We mean the ordinance of Baptism. As this holy ordinance is of so much importance, and instituted expressly for the benefit of penitent believers, that they may obtain forgiveness of all past sins, we shall, in the next chapter, consider the nature and object of this institution. But, in the meantime, before we enter into this investigation, permit us to exhort you, dear reader, to repent of every evil which we have pointed out to you in this chapter, and of every other sin which you may be guilty of. Repent with all your heart. Be determined that you will neither eat nor sleep, until you have commenced the infinitely important work. Remember how much you have at stake, that it is no less than the eternal happiness of the soul, eternal life beyond the grave. Oh, how many millions have gone down to their graves in an impenitent state! You may in an unexpected moment be cut off also. O then, give heed to the warning voice; let your heart be humble, and your spirit be contrite: confess your sins before God, and forsake them, and prepare yourself in all things to receive forgiveness through the ordinance of Baptism.

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